

LOST-TIME QUESTION.

By J. H. Waggoner.

THERE is scarcely another subject in the Bible which is made so plain as that of the Sabbath,--the day of the Creator's rest, which he sanctified for man's observance. Nothing concerning it is left uncertain or obscure. Every declaration of the Scriptures on that subject, whether it regards the day selected, the work commemorated, the sanctifying or setting apart for observance, the commandment, or the honor which God bestowed upon it,--all is unmistakable in its import, if we walk by the *old* Protestant rule: "The Bible, and the Bible alone." pg. 1, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

Notwithstanding it is made so plain in the Scriptures, there is no subject which is more controverted at the present time than that of the Sabbath; and, no matter what phase the controversy may assume, the real ground of contention in *the day*. Most people are willing to accept the Sabbath as *an institution*, if they can reserve to themselves the privilege of choosing *the day*. But that privilege is all that most obdurately self-willed and rebellious could ask, because *the day is the sum and substance of the institution*. This is most clearly stated by Mr. Morton, in his "Vindication of the True Sabbath," thus:-- pg. 1, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

"The only object, direct or indirect, of this commandment, is 'the day.' What are we commanded to remember?--'The day.' What are we required to keep holy?--'The day.' In what are we forbidden to work?--In 'the day.'" pg. 1, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

This is strictly true; and therefore he who controls "the day" fully controls the institution, and really controls or gives direction to the commandment. And if an individual, or a people, a legislature, or all the world, assume to fix "the day" to be observed as the Sabbath, they make themselves judges, and not doers, of the law,--a position not to be desired in the sight of the Lord. James 4:11. pg. 2, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

But it often happens that people become convinced that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and they say they would keep it if they only knew which day it was. They seem to think that the day was somehow lost, that times and seasons have been so changed that no one can certainly tell which is the seventh day of the week. Before we give Bible facts bearing on this subject, we will present a few points which are well worthy of our consideration. pg. 2, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

1. This query as to the identity of the day is never known to arise in a community while people are left undisturbed in the observance of Sunday. Everybody seems to be satisfied that Sunday is the first day of the week--the very day of the resurrection of Christ. The writer of these lines once talked over six hours with a minister who argued strenuously from the Scriptures that we ought to keep the first day of the week as "the Christian Sabbath." But after every text on that subject had been thoroughly examined, and he saw that they did not contain the proof which he had supposed they contained, he turned abruptly and inquired, "How do you know which is the seventh day?" While contending for the first day, not a doubt entered his mind; when he could not maintain the first day, he could not tell one day from another! pg. 2, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

2. All scientific, chronological, and legal records regard Sunday as the first day of the week, and, therefore, Saturday as the seventh day. All astronomical calculations recognize it as such. All the laws of the nations recognize it, and most of them make a legal holiday of Sunday under the name of "the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday." See law of New York, and others. Some go farther, and make its observance obligatory as a sacred day, under the same title. pg. 2, par. 4, [LOSTTIME]

3. Sunday is a name applied to the first day of the week in all histories, cyclopedias, and lexicons, the title of Sabbath, or name of Saturday, being uniformly given to the seventh day. pg. 3, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

4. Sunday is called the first day of the week in all the standards and all the authorities of all the churches. There is not an exception to this statement. pg. 3, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

5. Sunday was the name given to the first day of the week (*dies solis*, day of the sun) by the heathen before it was recognized as a day of observance by Christians. See Webster, and many other authorities. pg. 3, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

6. All nations and all people, wherever a week of seven days is known, call Saturday the seventh day and Sunday the first day of the week. There is no exception on the whole earth. pg. 3, par. 4, [LOSTTIME]

7. And when doubts have been raised by interested or prejudiced persons, the very ablest men in the scientific and the theological world have vindicated the integrity of the common computation. For instance, Bishop Haven, in a work on the ten

commandments, says there is no reason to be given why our seventh day of the week is not the original Sabbath day. And so must every one say who considers the nature and bearing of the facts we have stated. pg. 3, par. 5, [LOSTTIME]

8. To show the weakness of the objection, we once asked an intelligent member of the Baptist Church, who presented the query, to consider the matter carefully, and tell us *where* he thought the day *might* have been changed, or *how* he thought it *could* have been changed. After consideration, he confessed that he could not tell! He could not imagine how it could have been done, or if done, where or when it was done; for nobody knew anything about it. pg. 4, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

9. As nobody knows that time has been lost; as there is no record or tradition of the change or loss of the reckoning of the days of the week, we say it is *utterly impossible* that such a loss should be sustained, or such a change made, and yet the whole world know nothing of it, and all remain in perfect agreement as to the beginning and ending of the week. For consider:-- pg. 4, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

a. If one member of a family forgets the day of the week, the others correct him. There *may have been* cases where a whole family forgot the day, but we never heard of such an instance. pg. 4, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

b. If a whole family forgot the day, their neighbors would certainly detect the error, when it came to their knowledge. We cannot even imagine the possibility of several families or a whole community losing the day, and the same day at the same time, and continue ignorant of their loss. pg. 4, par. 4, [LOSTTIME]

c. But, not only a community, but a whole State, a whole nation, must lose a day at the same time, and ever remain ignorant of their loss. pg. 4, par. 5, [LOSTTIME]

d. And not only one nation, but every nation must drop out a day exactly at the same time, and none of them ever learn that they had made a mistake. pg. 4, par. 6, [LOSTTIME]

e. Moreover, every community and family and all scattered individuals of every nation on earth must lose a day at the same time, and all remain ignorant of the loss. pg. 5, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

f. To do this, all the inhabitants of the earth must have slept two nights and one entire day, all waking up the second day after they

retired to rest, and all thinking it was only the next day after they retired! In this manner only could it be possible. pg. 5, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

g. And, in that case, all the watchers with the sick, and all the mariners on the waters, must in like manner have slept, so that no "log," or reckoning, could detect the mistake which had been made. pg. 5, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

Reader, do you believe a loss of a day or the change of the reckoning of the days of the week is *possible*, and nobody know anything about it? We can readily imagine how the recorded miracle in the days of Joshua could take place, but here is a miracle too great for our comprehension. And if a miracle, it was performed with no other object than to hide from man the sanctified Sabbath of the Creator! pg. 5, par. 4, [LOSTTIME]

And now if any one is willing to keep the seventh day if he knows which it is, will not all acknowledge that it is safe, with such an enormous preponderance of testimony, to keep the Saturday as the seventh day? Can any one conscientiously overlook such overwhelming evidence, and choose the side for which even *a supposition* is not reasonably admissible? pg. 5, par. 5, [LOSTTIME]

Now let us examine the Bible record and see what it teaches. For convenience, we will consider the history of the world divided into three periods: 1. From creation to Moses. 2. From Moses to Christ. 3. From Christ to the present time. pg. 5, par. 6, [LOSTTIME]

I. When the Sabbath was made, there was but one computation of time in the history of the world; that was the week of seven days. No other origin of the week can be given than that given in the first two chapters of Genesis. It was the week as counted by Jehovah, for man had then existed only a fraction of a week. The Sabbath was not counted as the seventh day of the month, or the seventh day of the year. It was not a day of rest coming every thirtieth day, or ever three hundred and sixty-fifth day, but every seventh day. It stood related as to time only to the six days which preceded it. And these had no days preceding them. They date from "the beginning." pg. 6, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

And it was not man's Sabbath, man's rest, because it did not commemorate man's work. It was the Sabbath of the Lord God. He rested upon that day "from all his work which God created and made." It was founded on the work and choice of God alone. pg. 6, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

"And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." This word *bless* signifies to *praise* or *exalt* as well as to *prosper*. It indicates the delight which God took in his work and its memorial (Comp. Ex. 31:17), and the honor which he bestowed upon it. To *sanctify* means "to set apart to a sacred use." God separated it from the other days, reserving it for himself, to his glory, not to be used by man for his work, as were the other six. Of course he could not have sanctified it or set it apart,--separated it from the other days, guarded it from desecration by common use,--without giving Adam definite information as to how he was to regard it; how he should and how he should not use it. Comp. Ex. 19:12, 23, etc. pg. 6, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

Genesis is a book of history, not of law. It gives valuable information concerning law and obligation, but only historically. That book shows that time was reckoned by weeks in the days of the patriarchs. Notice a few instances:-- pg. 6, par. 4, [LOSTTIME]

Just before the flood, God said to Noah, "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth." Gen. 7:4. Of Noah, it is said: "And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark." Gen. 8:10. And again, "And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove." Verse 12. Laban said to Jacob: "Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week." Gen. 29:27, 28. These quotations, and more that might be made, show that the week, composed of seven days, was known and observed by the patriarchs both before and after the flood. Hence, it is strong proof that they had the Sabbath, and observed it. Of the antiquity of the week and the Sabbath among all nations, Gilfillan, in his large book on "The Sabbath," published by the American Tract Society, says:-- pg. 7, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

"Let it suffice, however, in a matter on which there is so general an agreement; to present the words of four eminent authors: 'The septenary arrangement of the days,' says Scaliger, 'was in use among the orientals from the remotest antiquity.' 'We have reason to believe,' observes President De Goguet, 'that the institution of that short period of seven days, called a *week*, was the first step taken by mankind in dividing and measuring their time. We find, from time immemorial, the use of this period among all nations, without any variation in the form of it. The Israelites, Assyrians, Egyptians, Indians, Arabians, and, in a word, all the nations of the East, have in all ages made use of a week, consisting of seven days. We find the same custom among the ancient Romans, Gauls, Britons, Germans, the nations of the North, and of America.' According to Laplace, 'the week is perhaps the most ancient

and incontestable monument of human knowledge.' It would appear that the Chinese, who have now no Sabbath, at one time honored the seventh day of the week."--Pages 364, 365. pg. 7, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

The only error in the above is ascribing this measurement of time *to man*. It was appointed directly by the Creator. pg. 8, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

All these ancient nations being descendants of Noah and his sons, must have received the Sabbath by tradition from them. That the Sabbath would not be lost from Adam to Abraham is manifest when we consider that Adam lived and conversed with Methuselah for 243 years; Methuselah lived co-temporary with Shem about 100 years; and Shem lived 148 years after Abraham was born. pg. 8, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

The lives of these three men span the whole time from Eden even to the old age of Abraham. How easy and natural for them to hand down the Sabbath from father to son, without any probability or even possibility of losing it. pg. 8, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

II. If claim is yet made that it was lost in the days of the patriarchs, it is successfully met with the fact that it was well known in the time of Moses. pg. 8, par. 4, [LOSTTIME]

1. The manna was given to Israel a full month before the law was proclaimed on Mount Sinai. And they were directed to gather a double portion on the sixth day, because in the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, there would be none in the field. pg. 8, par. 5, [LOSTTIME]

2. There is no reason given in Exodus 16 why the seventh day was the rest day; neither does it say that the seventh day will be, or shall become, the Sabbath. On the sixth day Moses said: "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord," or of the Lord. It was the holy Sabbath by a previous blessing and appointment. pg. 8, par. 6, [LOSTTIME]

3. That this was the original Sabbath, the Creator's rest day, is proved by the words of Jehovah in the fourth commandment. When he spoke his holy law with his own voice; when he wrote the "ten words" upon the tables of stone with his own finger, he gave this precept, and identified the Sabbath which he commanded to Israel as the day of his rest which was blessed and sanctified, as in Gen. 2:3. He said and he wrote, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God," and he commanded them to keep it holy. And he gave the reason in full, in the

following words: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." pg. 8, par. 7, [LOSTTIME]

Now, divesting one's self of all prejudice, and taking "the Bible, and the Bible alone," would it be possible for any man to draw from these words of the Creator himself any conclusion but this: that the seventh-day Sabbath or rest day which God commanded from Sinai, was the same day which he blessed and sanctified, as recorded in Gen. 2:3? *It is identified by every particular; and not one particular stated can be applied to any other day.* And if any one yet doubts that it is the same day, let him consider and answer this question: If the original or creation Sabbath, the rest day of the Lord God, is not identified in Exodus 20, what language could God have used if he had intended to identify it? Will some doubter answer this without a cavil? pg. 9, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

Here we will notice that the testimony of the Bible is uniform on the subject of the Sabbath. It knows but one day as the Sabbath. It never speaks of any other. The custom of calling different days the Sabbath, or of speaking of different weekly Sabbaths, never originated in the Bible; it was never derived from statements or facts found in the Bible. The patriarchal Sabbath, the Jewish Sabbath, the Christian Sabbath,--as terms of distinction these are "the speech of Ashdod;" the Bible knows nothing of them. The rest day of Jehovah, the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, is the one and only Sabbath of the holy Scriptures. pg. 9, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

The blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day at creation were not the only acts of the Almighty to put honor upon his memorial rest day. When he released his people from the house of bondage that they might serve him (Ex. 8:1), and declared his holy law, obedience to which is the only true service and the proof and essence of love to him (1 John 5:3), he wrought miracles to attest his regard for his holy day, and to inspire respect and reverence for it in the hearts of his people. pg. 10, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

4. The miracles wrought not only serve to identify the day, but they rendered it impossible that the Israelites should lose it or neglect it in their wanderings in the desert. When the manna fell, which was by a miracle, it fell six days, but did not fall on the Sabbath. In this manner God again sanctified or separated his holy day from the other days and from secular uses. When the manna was kept over night, it corrupted and became a mass of worms; but when it was kept over from the sixth day to the seventh, it did not corrupt, but remained good for food on

the Sabbath. Without attempting to trace this further, we find that, beside the commandment, and the rebukes frequently uttered, in the space of forty years the Lord wrought at least four thousand one hundred and sixty miracles, and all to put honor upon the seventh-day Sabbath! Can he have "the mind of the Lord," who casts reproach upon it and dishonors it? See Isa. 58:13, 14. No other institution, nothing else ever committed to his creatures, has received so much honor from God as his holy day, the seventh-day Sabbath. pg. 10, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

And thus it is rendered certain that when the Jews entered Palestine, 2,553 years after the creation, they had the true, original Sabbath of the Lord. In the promised land they became a great and numerous people, a settled and established nation for over 800 years. during all this time, they had the strictest laws and regulations touching the observance of the Sabbath. When they became worldly and selfish, they did not keep it as sacredly as they should have done (Jer. 17:19-24); and for this error God sent them into captivity. They did not lose the knowledge of the Sabbath; they lost the spirit of obedience. Neh. 13:15-18. And here again we notice the impossibility of losing the day. In their captivity they were scattered in one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. Esther 8:9. But on their restoration, the tribes were all represented among those who went up to Jerusalem; and in the days of the Saviour devout Jews "out of every nation under heaven" appeared there to keep their feasts, according to the law; yet when they came together, they were in perfect agreement as to the day of the Sabbath. Not a single family had lost the day. Not a doubt exists but that the Sabbath was known throughout the Levitical dispensation. pg. 11, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

III. We have now to consider the period from the advent of the Saviour to the present time. And first we notice that the Sabbath was well known in the time of Christ. We find the Sabbath mentioned some three-score times in the New Testament, and in such a manner as to leave no room for a doubt of its identity. Jesus healed the sick "on the Sabbath day," and he said it was "lawful" to do so; that is, that the law did not forbid such works of mercy on the Sabbath. This indicates that it was the identical Sabbath day that was in the law, the seventh day. "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." Luke 4:16. pg. 11, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

Three days are mentioned in the New Testament, which stand so related to each other that it is impossible to err in regard to the position of either one in the week. Mark 15:42, speaking of the crucifixion scenes, says "it was the preparation, that is, the day before the

Sabbath." Also Luke 23:54: "And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." It was called "the preparation" day because of the order to prepare their food on that day for the coming Sabbath. Ex. 16:23. pg. 12, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

The preparation day being past, they "rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment." Luke 23:56. Of course they rested the seventh day,--the very day upon which God rested when he made the heavens and the earth,--for that is the day specified and enjoined in the commandment. pg. 12, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

And the Sabbath being past, "upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher." Luke 24:1. "And when the Sabbath was past,... very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher." Mark 16:1, 2. Thus we have the day positively fixed by inspiration. That Sabbath was *the seventh day of the week*, because it was immediately followed by the first day of the succeeding week. And the preparation was the sixth day of the week, as in Exodus 16, because it was immediately followed by the seventh-day Sabbath--the only weekly Sabbath ever given to man from the Lord. pg. 12, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

Now the only inquiry remaining is, Has the day been lost between the time of Christ and the present year? That is impossible. We have histories covering the whole period, and the multiplicity of dates given show that there has never been any difficulty about the time. And even though months and years should be disarranged, that would not affect the identity of the days of the week. pg. 12, par. 4, [LOSTTIME]

Besides, there was a conflict of days. The Jews regarded as sacred the seventh day, while the heathen nations placed the greatest honor upon the first day, which they dedicated to the sun. After a few centuries, the Mohammedans arose and exalted the sixth day. Then there were three rival days, and the three parties would act as a check upon each other if one *could by any means* lose its day. But why consider further a thing so incredible, so far beyond the range of anything deemed possible? pg. 13, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

We notice one more fact, which, if we had no other evidence, and were not able to show that the objection involved an absurdity, would settle it beyond all controversy. It is this: Historians have recorded numerous eclipses, giving their magnitude and the day of their occurrence. Astronomers now make their calculations and verify the history; they find that such eclipses did take place at the times recorded, on the day of the week stated in history, *according to our*

present reckoning. And this *proves* that our reckoning of the week is the same as theirs. As some of these eclipses occurred before the Christian era, we know that no time has been lost, that the week has not been changed, since the days of the Saviour. pg. 13, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

Many have rested their objection on the change from Old to New Style; but they have not done it understandingly. No loss of time occurred *in any respect* by the change of style. The facts in brief are these: The Julian year was found to be too long; and the seasons were becoming disarranged. A new calendar was adopted in 1582, and the year was thrown back by calling the fifth day of October, as it was then reckoned, the fifteenth. But as the day of the month has no necessary connection with the day of the week, no change was made in the week. This is proved by the fact that the New Style was adopted in Rome 169 years before it was adopted in England, but the two nations were, in the meantime, in agreement on the days of the week. It is further proved by the fact that Russia never adopted the New Style, but still reckons by the Old; and yet she agrees with the other nations on the reckoning of the days of the week. pg. 13, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

Hill's Scientific or Perpetual Calendar shows the day of the week of any given date, in both Old and New Styles, for twenty centuries after Christ. It gives the following in its explanation of the method of ascertaining the day by both styles:-- pg. 14, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

"For instance, Washington was born Feb. 11, Old Style, or Feb. 22, New Style, 1732. It being a leap-year, the Dominical letter for February, Old Style, was B, and for the New Style, it was F. The table being entered with the former letter shows the 11th to be Friday, and being entered with the latter shows the 22nd to be on the same day of the week." pg. 14, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

No one ought to be so ignorant as to stumble on a fact so plain as this. pg. 14, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]

In the year 1865 our Consul at St. Petersburg transmitted a communication to our Government. It was indorsed by our Minister to Russia, Cassius M. Clay, and was dated both in Old Style and New Style, giving the reckoning of the month both for Russia and the United States. But the day of the week was the same. And, as before said, astronomy confirms it all. The days of the week cannot be lost. pg. 14, par. 4, [LOSTTIME]

If any have stifled convictions of duty, or eased their consciences, by this very flimsy excuse, we entreat them to consider the

risk they take. We have far more than proved our position. Much of the evidence here given might be dropped out, and the case still be proved beyond all reasonable controversy. Taken all together, there is not the shadow of an excuse for disregarding the Sabbath of the Lord God--the seventh day. Excuses are not admissible when God calls. Luke 14:16-24. And surely, where the evidence is so abundant, so overwhelming, he who makes excuses does it as his peril. pg. 15, par. 1, [LOSTTIME]

Instead of seeking excuses, we ought to be thankful to God that he has made everything pertaining to his commandment so plain. And Paul says the law is spiritual, holy, just, and good. If we are not in harmony with it, we ought to fear lest it is because we are not spiritual; lest our hearts refuse to be reconciled to that which is holy; to that which God has sanctified, and in which he greatly delights. pg. 15, par. 2, [LOSTTIME]

J. H. W. pg. 15, par. 3, [LOSTTIME]